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SUBJECT: GERMANY H1N1 FLU UPDATE: 333 CONFIRMED CASES

REF: A) Berlin 762, B) Berlin 754 and previous.

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The net number of H1N1 cases in Germany rose by one infection to 333 on June 25. (Authorities identified six new cases, but retracted five previously-confirmed ones, adjusting the total increase to one.) State health ministers reassured the public after meeting on June 24 in Thuringia to discuss the outbreak. A Japanese school in North Rhine-Westphalia that was closed earlier after the virus spread among students has reopened. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) On June 25, the National Reference Center for Influenza at RKI announced in its press briefing six new laboratory-confirmed cases of H1N1 for Germany, but subtracted five that were previously confirmed. This net one-case increases the total number of confirmed cases in Germany to 333 (Refs A, B and previous). Five previously confirmed H1N1 infections in Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia were found not to be the new flu. New cases were distributed among the federal states as follows: Bavaria (3), Hesse (1), and Saxony-Anhalt (2), North Rhine-Westphalia (-4), and Rhineland Palatinate (-1).

13. (SBU) North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) remains the state showing the highest number of infections among all German states with 156 confirmed cases, followed by Bavaria (50 cases) and Baden-Wuerttemberg (44 cases). The Federal State of Saarland remains the only state without confirmed virus cases. The number of confirmed infections resulting from domestic transmission of the virus remains at 178.

Japanese school reopens

14. (SBU) Media reports indicate that the Japanese school in Duesseldorf (NRW) that was closed two weeks ago due to confirmed H1N1 cases among its students has reopened. About 41 children of a total of 68 children confirmed to be infected with the virus reportedly remain under quarantine at home as a preventive measure.

Health Ministers urge no panic after meeting on H1N1

15. (SBU) At a conference of the state health ministers on H1N1 on June 24 in Erfurt (Thuringia), the ministers jointly stated that there is no need for panic in Germany. Countermeasures such as the vaccination of the entire German population will not take place, given the fairly small number of infections and mild course of the virus in Germany. However, preventive measures will consequently be followed, said German Health Minister Ulla Schmidt. Federal states have already concluded contracts to obtain vaccine but they will only be implemented if the WHO issues such a recommendation at the beginning of July. Schmidt said that the EU health ministers would meet the same day to discuss further joint strategies.

KOENIG